



# CONTINUUM OF CARE REFORM UPDATE: JULY 2019

***“All children deserve to live with a committed, nurturing and permanent family that prepares youth for a successful transition into adulthood.”***

The Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) draws together a series of existing and new reforms to our child welfare services program and was designed based on the understanding that children who must live apart from their biological parents do best when they are cared for in committed and nurturing family homes.

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**Definitions**

ACL: All County Letter  
ACIN: All County Information Notice  
CANS: Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths  
CBHDA: County Behavioral Health Directors Association  
CDE: California Department of Education  
CCR: Continuum of Care Reform  
CDSS: California Department of Social Services  
CFL: County Fiscal Letter  
CFT: Child and Family Team  
CIBHS: California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions  
CPOC: Chief Probation Officers of California  
CWDA: County Welfare Directors Association  
CWS/CMS: Child Welfare Services Case Management System  
DHCS: Department of Health Care Services  
EC: Emergency Caregiver  
FFA: Foster Family Agency  
FPRRS: Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention, and Support  
GH: Group Home  
ICC: Intensive Care Coordination  
ICPM: Integrated Core Practice Model  
IHBS: Intensive Home-Based Services  
ISFC: Intensive Services Foster Care  
MHP: Mental Health Plan  
MHSUDS: Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services  
LOC: Level of Care  
LOCP: Level of Care Protocol  
PT: Presumptive Transfer  
RFA: Resource Family Approval  
SMHS: Specialty Mental Health Services  
STRTP: Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs  
TARFA: Technical Assistance Resource Family Approval  
TFC: Therapeutic Foster Care

## Highlights

- From Q1 2017 to Q1 2019 the overall foster care population in congregate care declined from 4,590 to 3,855.
- As of July 2, 2019, the number of licensed STRTP facilities was 274 (3,568 capacity, with 2,118 placements). Of those, 101 have received a Mental Health Program Approval. In total, 427 facilities (with 3,305 placements as of June 30, 2019) have either been licensed as STRTPs or are a GH pending a determination following technical assistance provided by CDSS. (see page 8 for more information)
- The number of children who have received a Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting is increasing. As of May 1, 2019, 61.08% of children and NMDs in foster care had received a CFT--an increase from 40.29% on October 1, 2018. (see page 5)
- Emergency Caregiver (EC) RFA forms that explain delays in RFA approvals have been distributed to all 58 counties and are being completed and returned on a monthly basis. So far seven distributions of this form have been completed. (see page 7)
- Licensed FFAs: As of July 3, 2019, there 206 FFAs approved to do RFA, as well as 95 ISFC applications reviewed with 87 rate letters issued.

### ***Children and Youth Specialty Mental Health Services – Moving Policy into Practice***

DHCS, in collaboration with CDSS, and in consultation with a planning committee planned and conducted regional provider and county convenings this year to support implementation efforts and initiatives related to Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs), Presumptive Transfer, Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) and Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC).

This series of provider and county convenings are completed and were well-attended with staff from Foster Family Agencies (FFAs), STRTPs, County Mental Health Plans, County Child Welfare, and Juvenile Probation representatives.

The convenings took place as follows:

Convening 1: Sacramento Area (Sacramento), December 11, 2018;  
Convening 2: Southern Region (Riverside), February 20, 2019;  
Convening 3: Central Region (Visalia), March 7, 2019;  
Convening 4: Bay Area Region (Oakland), May 8, 2019;  
Convening 5: Los Angeles Region (Long Beach), June 4, 2019; and  
Convening 6: Superior Region (Anderson), June 11, 2019.

## Integrated Services

### ***STRTP Mental Health Program Approval Protocol and Interim Regulations***

DHCS continues to work collaboratively with CDSS and stakeholders regarding the DHCS Mental Health Program Approval process for STRTPs. DHCS is currently updating the:  
1) Interim STRTP Regulations; 2) Interim STRTP Mental Health Program Approval Protocol, and 3) the STRTP Mental Health Program Approval Application to be issued via a Mental Health

and Substance Use Disorder Services Information Notice (IN). DHCS shared an updated version of the Interim STRTP Regulations with stakeholders for feedback on May 31, 2019, with feedback due on June 17, 2019. DHCS expects to issue the revised interim regulations via an IN in July 2019. Changes made in the revised Interim STRTP Regulations include, but are not limited to, increased flexibility with the provision of medication support, including allowing Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants to conduct some of the activities (within their scopes of practice) previously limited to Psychiatrists and Physicians; allowing more time for completion of progress notes; providing more detailed guidance on assessment and progress note content; and adding program flexibility requirements.

As of June 7, 2019, DHCS has received one hundred and forty-nine (149) applications for Mental Health Program Approval, which are in various stages of review to ensure all program requirements are met. One hundred and twenty-seven (127) mental health program approval onsite reviews have been conducted and one hundred and one (101) mental health program approvals have been granted. DHCS continues to work in partnership with the respective MHPs to jointly conduct Mental Health Program Approval onsite reviews of STRTPs. This collaboration has provided DHCS and MHPs the opportunity to jointly use the Mental Health Program Approval Protocol and to identify areas where clarification or refinement may be needed. DHCS continues to communicate with MHPs in order to provide technical assistance, information, and updates on an ongoing basis.

#### ***Update on the CDSS/DHCS Study of Child Welfare System Mental Health Screenings and Referrals to county Mental Health Plans for Children/Youth in Foster Care***

CDSS and DHCS continue to work collaboratively to match data on Child Welfare System Screenings and Referrals to MHP SMHS claims in order to monitor the pathway into mental health services and to identify areas for process improvements.

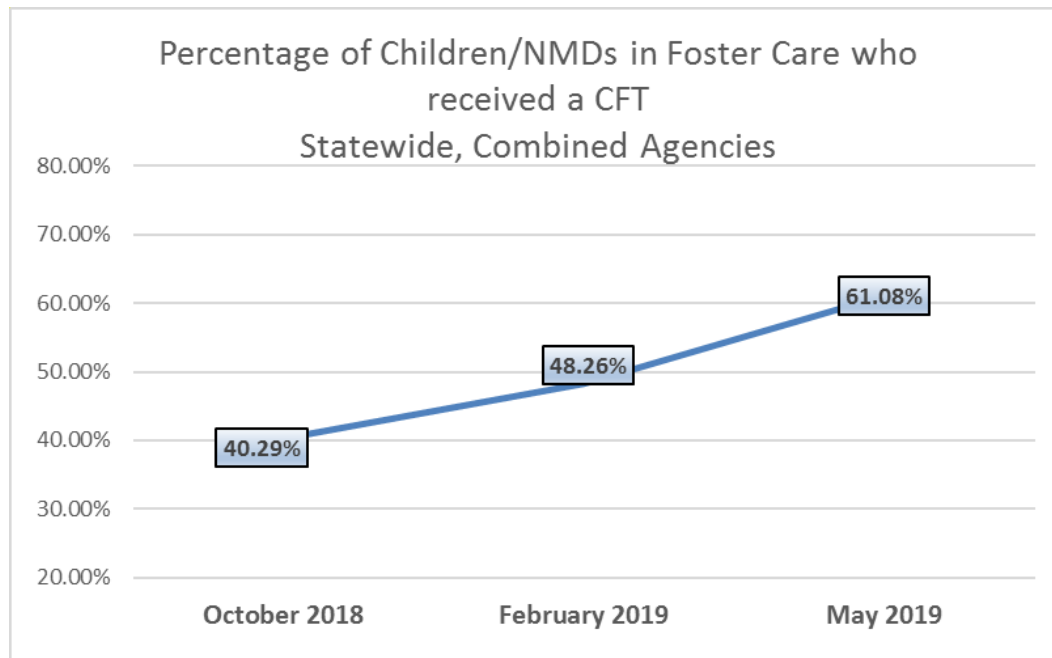
In addition, DHCS has been working with CDSS to refine the referral process questionnaire that was developed to address the finding that slightly more than a quarter of the referrals from Child Welfare did not actually get to the MHP. The questionnaire will determine referral processes and will also collect information regarding the circumstances under which specific children/youth for their county did not receive services.

### **The Child and Family Teaming Process**

As of May 1, 2019, a total of 35,501 of 58,126 (61.08%) children and NMDs in foster care received a CFT.

Overall there were 58,126 children and NMDs in foster care on May 1, 2019 compared to 62,138 on February 1, 2019. Of the 58,126 children and NMDs in foster care, 35,501 had received a CFT (61.08%). This is an increase of 5,515 children or NMDs and an increase of 12.82% in CFTs received.

As of May 1, 2019, 49.63% of probation-supervised children and NMDs had received a CFT, an increase of 2.7% from the percentage on February 1, 2019, and 61.6% of Child Welfare-supervised children and NMDs had received a CFT, which is a 13.29% increase from the 48.31% of Child Welfare-supervised children and NMDs who had received one as of February 1, 2019.



### ***ICPM, CFT and CANS Implementation***

CANS version 2.0 was successfully released on June 1st, 2019 and is now available to all users across the State. New and improved functionality include a reassessment feature that populates CANS ratings from the client's previously completed assessment. This feature helps to maintain data integrity, avoids duplicate data entry, and decreases time spent by the user. CANS 2.0 also includes a feature that displays client ratings over time in an easy to read graphic and table. With the new "compare over time" feature, workers can quickly recognize areas where client ratings improved or declined at a glance, which can assist in the creation of action plans that can target specific areas. Additional CANS 2.0 features include prompts that ask the user to save data to prevent data loss. User accountability is improved with a "delete reason" now a requirement prior to deleting an assessment.

With the completion of the CANS 2.0 product, CWDS is now researching CANS reporting needs and identifying a data model that will support reporting and data analytics.

## Resource Family Approval

Existing RFA forms continue to be modified and posted for use on the [CDSS RFA Website](#). The RFA team continues to participate in regional CWDA meetings and learning collaboratives across the State to discuss implementation of RFA in order to improve timelines and outcomes.

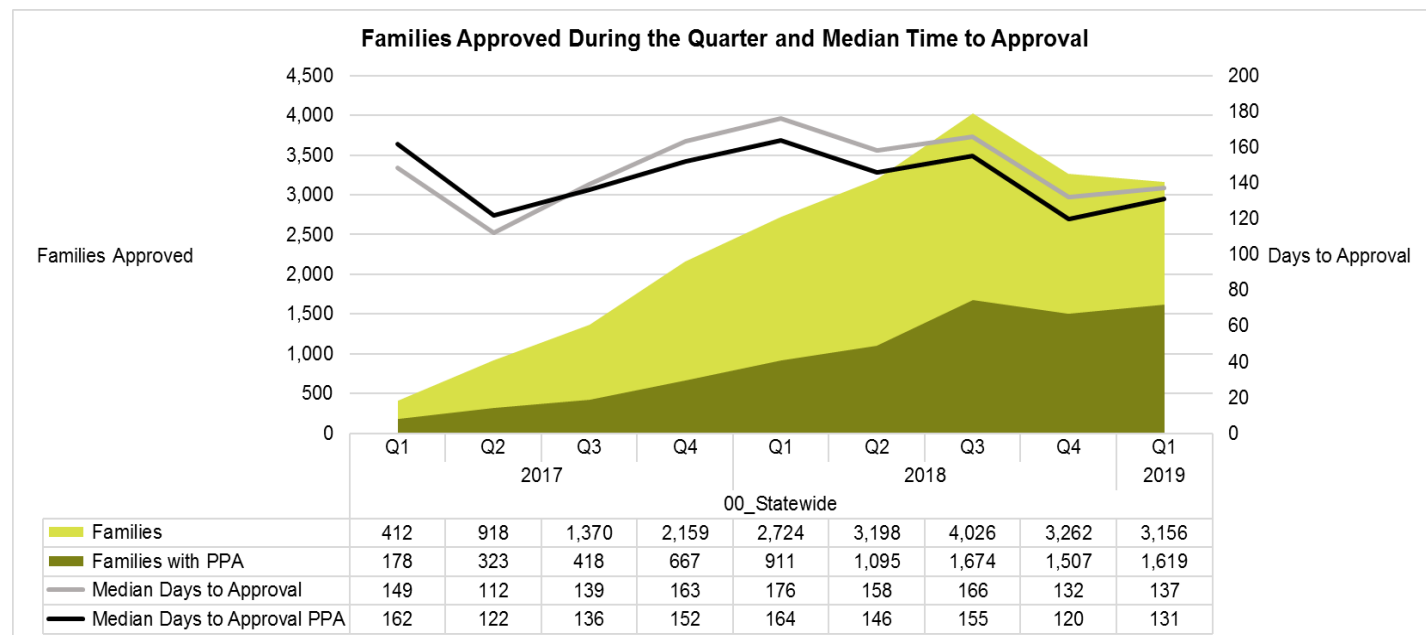
Version 6 of the Written Directives was released on April 11, 2019. It includes clarifications of pre-existing policy as well as new policy that was developed based on legislative changes.

### **Resource Family Approval (RFA) Technical Assistance Unit**

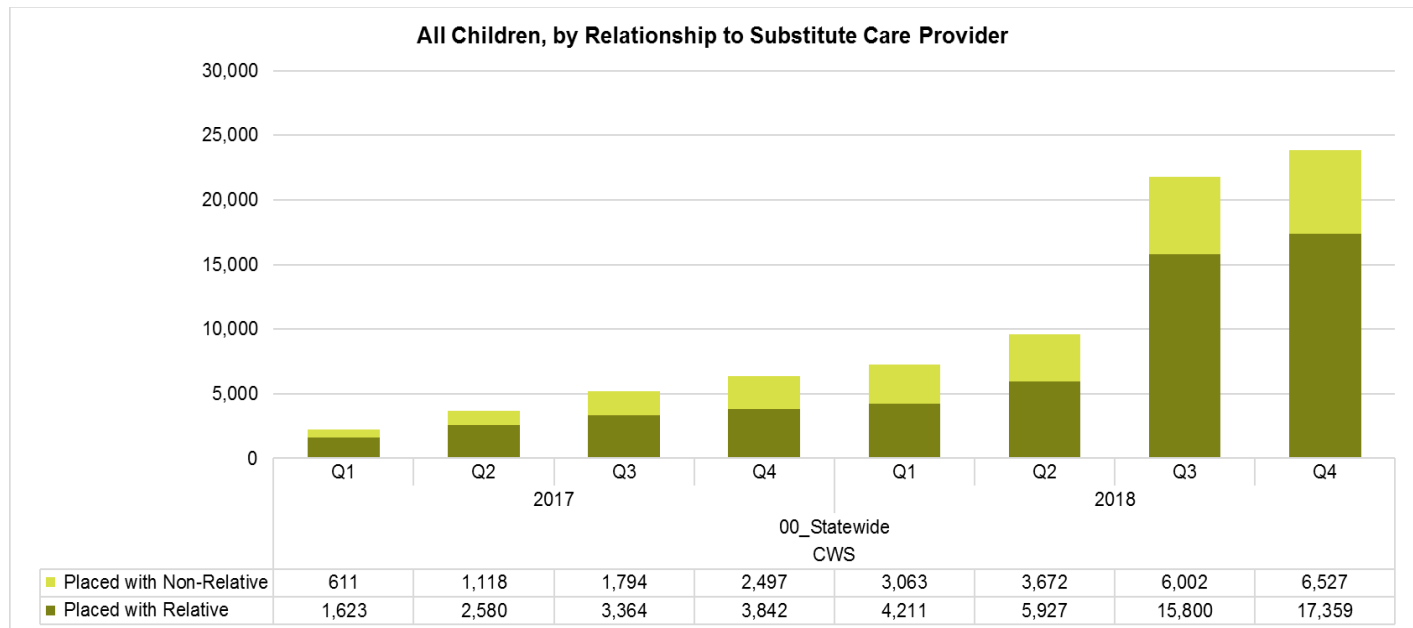
RFA annual reviews are conducted for all 58 counties along with RFA Technical Assistance. The County Liaison's role is to facilitate Technical Assistance RFA (TARFAs) meetings/trainings that disseminate RFA related information from the State to counties. This includes updates on any changes to the Written Directives as well as All County Letters/All County Information Notices, and provides guidance on drafting Notice of Action Letters among other presentations. County Liaisons also facilitate monthly scheduled RFA legal consultations for the counties regarding individual RFA determinations.

### **RFA Applications and Approvals**

The following chart illustrates the number of approved RFA applications as well as the average days to approval for applications approved between quarter one of 2017 and quarter one of 2019. Since 2017, the average days to approval have decreased slightly even as caseloads have significantly increased. The charts below were taken from CCR's publicly available Dashboard, accessible through the [CDSS website](#).



The following chart breaks out the reported caregiver relationship type for child welfare supervised children placed in Resource Family Homes (relative versus non-relative) between quarter one 2017 and quarter four 2018. Note that the caregiver relationship may not be reflected in CWS-CMS all instances, leading to a potential undercount of relative placements. The chart below displays only county approved homes, FFA approved homes will be provided in the next SRL.



### Emergency Caregiver Data Collection

Per [ACL 18-128](#) and pursuant to [WIC 11461.36](#), CDSS is responsible for monitoring Emergency Caregiver payments, including tracking the usage and duration of payments and evaluating the duration of time a child or NMD is in a home pending resource family approval. To this end, CDSS is distributing forms regarding delays to Resource Family approval for counties to complete and return monthly. Counties submit the forms to CDSS regarding reasons for delay in processing RFA applications for RFA applicants with placements prior to approval pending more than 90 days.

The following table summarizes the county, self-reported data regarding their RFA placement prior to approval and Emergency Caregiver funding caseloads as of April 31, 2019. Out of 58 counties, 48 have provided their April 2019 data.

<b>Placements Prior to Approval/Emergency Caregiver Funding: April 2019</b>	
Total # of RF applicants with preapproval placements over 90 days	1,386
Total # of RF applicants with preapproval placements over 180 days	614
Total # applicants that were determined to be good cause by the county	960
Total % pending over 90 days that were determined to be good cause by the county	69%
Total # of RFHs with pre-approval placements	3,183
Total # placements receiving funding over 90 days	1,453
Total % of placements receiving funding over 90 days	45.6%
Percentage of Counties that Submitted April data	83%

### CCR Implementation Data

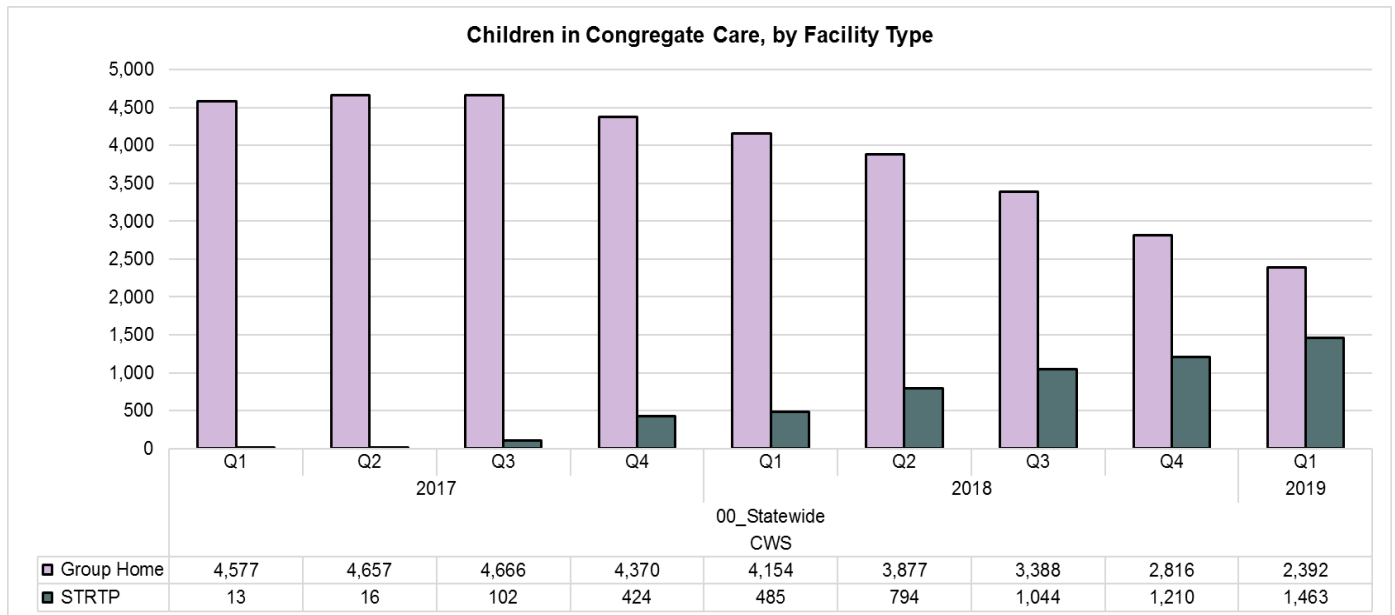
As of July 2, 2019, the number of licensed STRTP facilities was 274 (3,568 capacity, with 2,118 placements), compared with 165 facilities with a capacity of 2,682 in December 2018. Of those 274, 101 have received a Mental Health Program Approval. In total, 427 facilities (with 3,305 placements as of July 2, 2019) have either been licensed as STRTPs or are a GH pending a determination following technical assistance provided by CDSS. STRTP licenses, Group Home applications and placements are outlined in the table below.

#### ***ST RTP Transitions as of July 2, 2019***

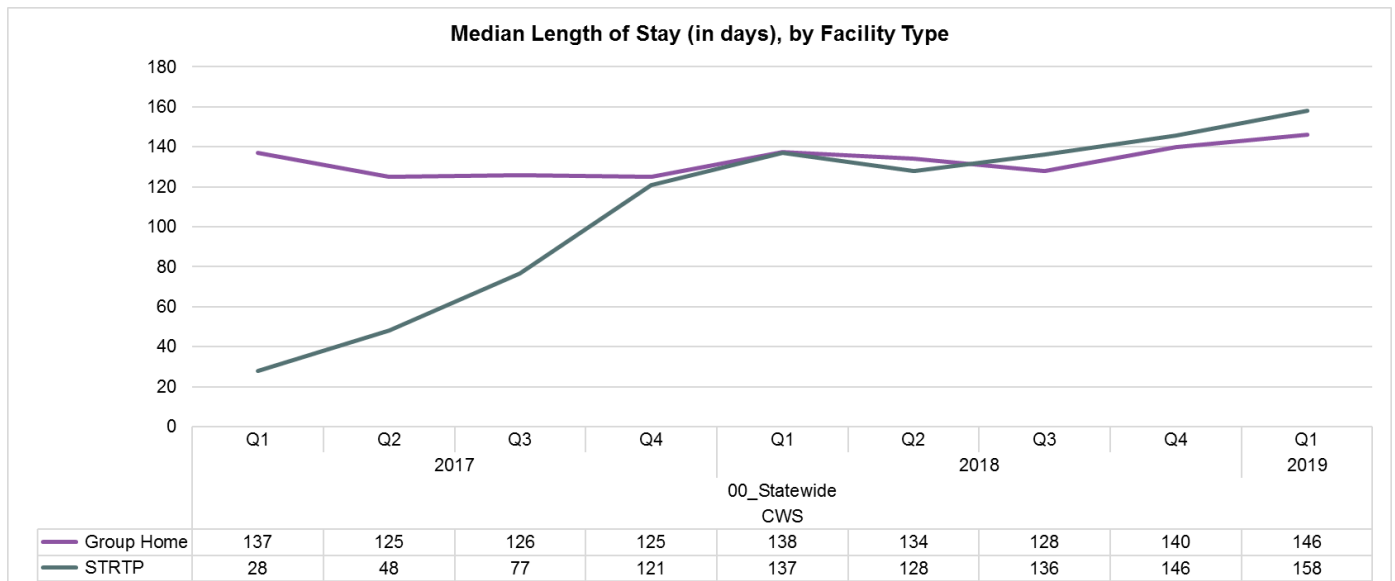
<b>Type of Facility</b>	<b>Number of Facilities</b>	<b>Point-in-Time Placements (06.30.19)</b>
Total Licensed STRTPs	274	2,118
Group Homes (Submitted STRTP Application - In Process)	153	734
Group Homes Not Converting to STRTPs	409	286
Group Homes with Denied STRTP applications	23	25

The following two charts look at STRTP and Group Home placements and median lengths of stay. The first chart shows all youth in an STRTP or Group Home placement at some time during the quarter. The second chart shows of the median length of stay for children in group homes and STRTPs. It is important to note that if a Group Home transitioned to an STRTP at some point during the quarter, then its placements and lengths of stay were attributed to the STRTP category. Because of this, STRTP numbers may be slightly inflated.

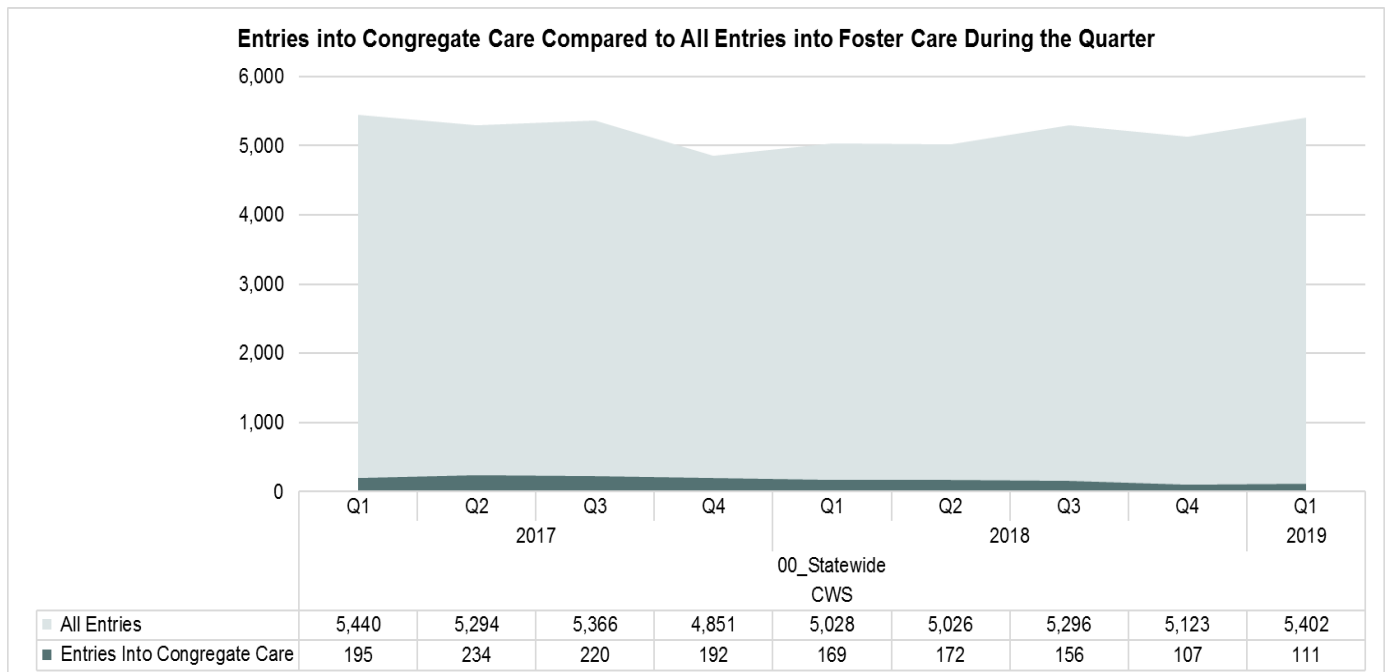




The chart above displays group home and STRTP placements over time. Group home placements have steadily declined while STRTP placements have increased over time.



Median lengths of stay for group home and STRTPs have increased from 140 days to 146 and 146 days to 158, respectively.



All Children Placed provides an unduplicated count of children ages 0 to 17 years old with a new out of home placement during the month. Children placed into STRTPs, In-State Group Homes, and Out-of-State Group Homes are subsets of All Children Placed. Of 5,204 entries into foster care during Q1 2019, 111, or roughly 2% were into Congregate Care.

## Level of Care Rates Protocol Implementation

The implementation of the Level of Care Protocol (LOCP) began in March 1, 2018 for new entries into foster care and placed with FFAs but also includes some limited requests from FFAs for a LOCP determination. As of May 21, 2019, the LOCP data included in this report is point-in-time and is based on information entered into the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS). The State is using the data to confirm which counties are using the tool and if the information is being entered correctly.

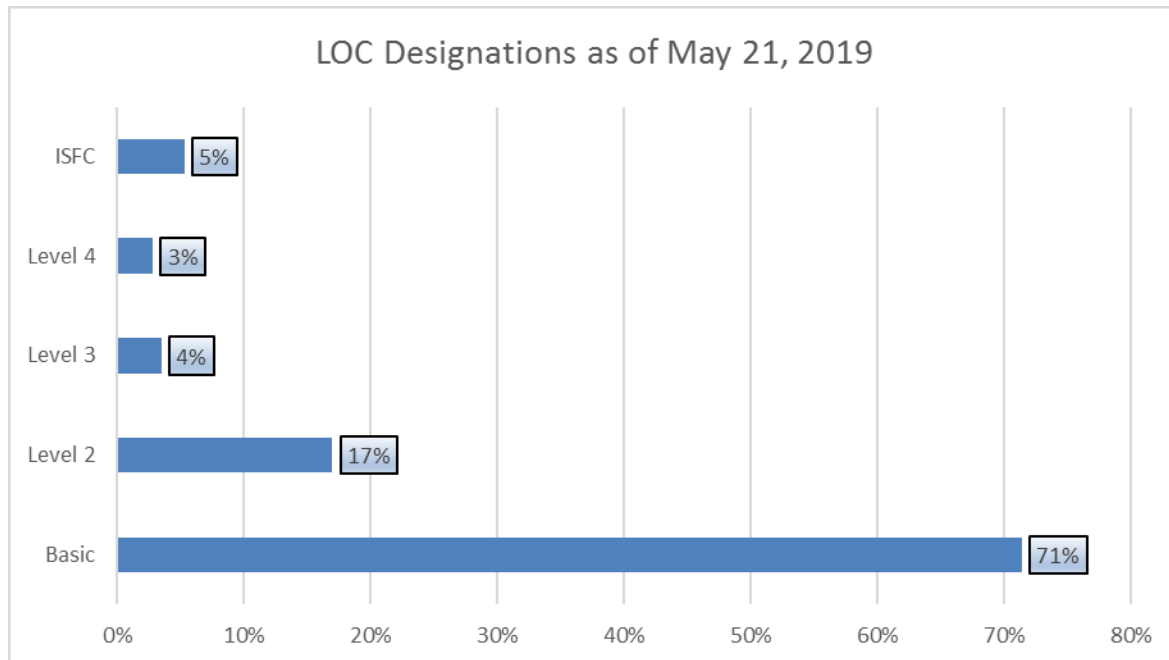
### FFA Level of Care and Rate Percentages

Statewide, 5,361 FFA placements received a LOC rate. Below is a percentage breakdown of the placements by the Level of Care and ISFC.

A total of 56 open placements in seven counties in CWS/CMS were designated with both a LOC rate and as ISFC. This indicates a need for further data entry instructions. As it stands now, it is possible to select both a Level of Care rate and designate a child/youth ISFC at the same time.

With a little over a year of implementation completed with the FFAs, counties are increasing their use of the LOCP. CDSS is finalizing an ACL that will provide further policy clarifications and guidance for the continued use of the LOCP with FFAs for all FFA placements regardless of when they enter care.

The full implementation of the LOCP continues to be contingent primarily upon the finalization of modifications to the LOCP Matrix and other related forms. Counties will be given a reasonable time to calibrate training and adjust for any new changes, once the date for full implementation is communicated. The evaluation (validity study) of the LOCP will be conducted. The proposed design of the study needs to be finalized. Once finalized, it will be conducted following full implementation of the LOCP for all Resource Families.



Source: CWS/CMS, May 21, 2019

## Fiscal Update

### County Fiscal Letters (CFL)

The following CFLs are letters sent to counties that provide claiming instructions and funding amounts for CCR activities since the last Supplemental Reporting Language update.

#### County Fiscal Letters (CFLs)

- [CFL 18-19-81](#) Funding For Emergency Caregivers (EC) With Placement Of Child(ren) And/Or Non-Minor Dependents (NMD) Prior To Resource Family Approval (RFA) And Aid To Families With Dependent Children—Foster Care (AFDC—FC)
- [CFL 18-19-78](#) Fiscal Year Fiscal Year 2018-19 Level Of Care Protocol Tool General Fund Allocation
- [CFL 18-19-61](#) Fiscal Year 2017-18 Continuum Of Care Reform Reappropriation General Fund Planning Allocation For Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention, And Support, Child And Family Teams, And Resource Family Approval Programs
- [CFL 18-19-58](#) Claiming Instructions For The Level Of Care Rate Determination Protocol

- [CFL 18-19-57](#) Fiscal Year 2018-19 Continuum of Care Reform Second Level Administration Review General Fund Allocation

## **2019 Budget Act**

The [2019 May Revision](#) provides a proposed FY 2019-20 budget of \$419.9 million of funding, which includes \$292.0 million State General Fund. The [2019 May Revision](#) details the costs for CCR and are described in the *Continuum of Care Reform (CCR)* premise description, which is available in the Estimates Methodologies section, pages 119-130. Additional information on CCR is included in the Reference Documents section, pages 57-59. The 2019 Budget Act will include additional funding to support CCR components including RFA, FPRRS, etc.

## **CCR Reconciliation**

With the implementation of CCR, counties were provided upfront General Fund investments for the new Home Based Family Care rates and administrative activities such as FPRRS, CFT and RFA. It is anticipated that over time, assistance savings will be generated through group home cases moving to more family-like home based settings. A reconciliation process will be used to complete a thorough, by-county analysis to determine if the level of savings realized will impact the level of the on-going investment amounts. The following provides updates to the reconciliation process:

- A county-specific reconciliation process was developed and implemented starting in December 2016 with input from County Welfare Director's Association, and counties.
- [CFL No. 16-17-43](#) provided all counties with instructions for the reconciliation process for developing a base cost per case. It also explained that administrative expenditures will be pulled quarterly by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for the reconciliation process. All counties have submitted their assistance base cost per case.
- [All County Letter \(ACL\) No. 17-07](#) provided the revised Aid to Families with Dependent Children Foster Care Caseload Movement and Expenditures Report instructions that will assist with the tracking of caseload movement.
- An additional [CFL No. 16-17-60](#) provided updated reconciliation methodology for counties (typically small counties) that did not serve any cases impacted by the new CCR rates so that a fair reconciliation calculation could be performed.
- CDSS provided technical assistance and training to probation staff on CCR fiscal claiming and reconciliation in March, June and October 2017 for California Probation Officers of California (CPOC) Business Managers, at the CPOC Conference.
- In October 2018, CDSS had enough expenditure data to evaluate reconciliation of the CCR assistance savings to the CCR new rates/administration costs, for each county, based on FY 2016-17 actual data.
- CDSS has completed the reconciliation calculation and the results will be released shortly.
- In October 2019, CDSS will begin the FY 2017-18 reconciliation.

**Policy Claiming:**

- [CFL No. 18-19-52](#): County Welfare Department County Expense Claim Time Study And Claiming Instructions For The March 2019 Quarter – Child and Family Teams
- [CFL No. 18-19-25](#): Child Welfare Department (CWD) County Expense Claim (CEC) Time Study And Claiming Instructions For The December 2018 Quarter – Second Level Administration Reviews and Level Of Care Protocol
- [CFL 18-19-02](#): Claiming Instructions For Establishment Of A Services Only Rate To Secure Additional Services And Supports
- [CFL 17-18-80](#) Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support (FPRRS) Funding Opportunity Child Care
- [CFL 17-18-59](#) Claiming Instructions for the Short-Term, Interim Funding for Emergency Caregivers with Placement of Child(ren) and/or Non-Minor Dependent(s) (NMD) Prior to Resource Family Approval (RFA)
- [CFL 17-18-36](#) Reminder of Claiming Instructions for Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)
- [CFL 17-18-32E](#) Errata to Changes to the County Assistance (CA) 800 Claim and Addition of the CA 800 Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) CLAIM - Phase II Claiming Instructions
- [CFL 17-18-32](#) Changes to The County Assistance (CA) 800 Claim and Addition of the CA 800 Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Claim - Phase II Claiming Instructions
- [CFL 17-18-30](#) Updates to claiming instructions for the Resource Family Approval (RFA) Program
- [CFL 17-18-09E](#) Errata to claiming instructions to county probation departments for Nonfederal Child and Family Teams for Youth in Detention
- [CFL 17-18-09](#) Claiming Instructions to County Probation Departments for Nonfederal Child and Family Teams for Youth in Detention
- [CFL 16-17-60](#) Continuum of Care (CCR) Reconciliation Methodology for Zero Base Populations
- [CFL 16-17-43](#) Continuum of Care Reform Assistance Reconciliation Methodology
- [CFL 16-17-41](#) Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Home Based Family Care Rate Phase I Claiming Instructions
- [CFL 16-17-41E](#) Errata to Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Home Based Family Care Rate Phase I Claiming Instructions
- [CFL 16-17-41EII](#) Errata II to Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Home Based Family Care Rate Phase I Claiming Instructions
- [CFL 16-17-22](#) Child and Family Team Claiming Instructions
- [CFL 16-17-20](#) Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support Funding Opportunity Child Care
- [CFL 15-16-48](#) Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support Program Claiming Instructions for County Probation Departments
- [CFL 15-16-37E](#) Errata to Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support Program

**Allocations:**

- [CFL 18-19-46](#): Fiscal Year 2017-18 Continuum Of Care Reform Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention, And Support, Child And Family Teams, And Resource Family Approval Programs Final Allocations

- [CFL 18-19-37](#): Fiscal Year 2018-19 Child And Family Teams General Fund Allocation
- [ACL 18-130](#): Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention, And Support (FPRRS) Activities And Outcomes Report For Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18 And Funding Opportunity For FY 2018-19
- [CFL 18-19-32](#): Fiscal Year 2018-19 Continuum Of Care Reform Resource Family Approval Program Allocations For County Welfare And Probation Departments
- [CFL 18-19-13](#): Fiscal Year 2018-19 Continuum Of Care Reform Services Only Rate General Fund Allocation
- [CFL 18-19-05](#): Fiscal Year 2017-18 Continuum Of Care Reform Assistance Allocation
- [CFL 18-19-03](#): Funding For Emergency Caregivers (EC) With Placement Of Child(ren) And/Or Non-Minor Dependents (NMD) Prior To Resource Family Approval (RFA)
- [CFL 17-18-78](#) Fiscal Year 2015-16 Continuum of Care Reform Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention, and Support Program Reappropriated Funds Final Allocation for County Welfare and Probation Departments
- [CFL 17-18-76](#) Fiscal Year 2016-17 Continuum of Care Reform Reappropriation Planning Allocation for Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention, and Support, Child and Family Teams, and Resource Family Approval Programs
- [CFL 17-18-68](#) Fiscal Year 2017-18 Allocation for Continuum of Care Reform Second Level Administration Review
- [CFL 17-18-47](#) Fiscal Year 2017-18 Continuum of Care Reform Resource Family Approval Program Allocations For County Welfare And Probation Departments
- [CFL 17-18-42](#) Fiscal Year 2017-18 Continuum of Care Reform Child and Family Teams Allocation for County Welfare and Probation Departments
- [CFL 17-18-54](#) Fiscal Year 2017-18 Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention, and Support Program Final Allocation for County Welfare and Probation Departments
- [CFL 17-18-52](#): Fiscal Year 2017-18 Continuum of Care Reform Assistance Allocation
- [CFL 16-17-76](#) Fiscal Year 2016-17 Final Continuum of Care Reform Resource Family Approval Program Allocation for County Welfare and Probation Departments
- [CFL 16-17-71](#) Fiscal Year 2016-17 Allocation for Continuum of Care Reform Second Level Administration Review
- [CFL 16-17-54](#) Fiscal Year 2016-17 Continuum of Care Reform Foster Family Agency Social Worker Rate Increase General Fund Allocation
- [CFL 16-17-45](#) Fiscal Year 2016-17 Continuum of Care Reform Resource Family Approval Program Allocations for County Welfare and Probation Departments
- [CFL 16-17-35](#) Fiscal Year 2015-16 Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support Program Planning Allocation
- [CFL 16-17-34](#) Fiscal Year 2016-17 Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support Program Allocations for County Welfare and Probation Departments
- [CFL 16-17-05](#) Fiscal Year 2015-16 Continuum of Care Reform Foster Family Agency Social Work Rate Increase General Fund Allocation”
- [CFL 15-16-58](#) Fiscal Year 2015-16 Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support Program Allocations for County Welfare and Probation Departments